

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus comprising:
 2. a housing having a distal edge and a proximal edge and a longitudinal exterior dimension from the distal edge to the proximal edge; and
 4. a tape retractably coilable within the housing and extending from the distal edge of the housing, wherein the tape includes,
 6. a distal end,
 7. a first set of distance marks functionally identifying positions relative to the distal end, and
 9. a set of inside measure distance indicators each for indicating a distance from the distal end of the tape to a corresponding distance mark plus the longitudinal exterior dimension of the housing,
 12. whereby the apparatus may be employed to perform an inside measurement whose value is indicated by the tape.
 1. 2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the tape further includes:
 2. a set of outside measure distance indicators each for indicating a distance from the distal end of the tape to a corresponding distance mark;
 4. whereby the apparatus may be employed to perform an outside measurement whose value is indicated by the tape.
 1. 3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein:
 2. the first set of distance marks includes major marks and minor marks; and
 3. the longitudinal exterior dimension of the housing is a whole multiple of a distance between adjacent major marks.
 1. 4. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising:
 2. an end piece coupled to the tape.

1 5. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein:

2 the end piece is coupled to the tape so as to have a predetermined distance of longitudinal
3 slop;

4 whereby the end piece can be used in making outside measurements and inside
5 measurements.

1 6. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein:

2 the end piece is rigidly coupled to the tape and includes a portion which is perpendicular
3 to the tape for hooking over an end of an object to be outside measured; and

4 the tape further includes a second set of distance marks functionally identifying positions
5 relative to the perpendicular portion of the end piece.

1 7. The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the tape further includes:

2 a set of outside distance indicators each for indicating a distance from the perpendicular
3 portion of the end piece to a corresponding outside distance indicator.

1 8. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein:

2 the first set of distance marks includes major marks and minor marks; and

3 the longitudinal dimension of the housing is not an integer multiple of a distance between
4 adjacent major marks.

1 9. An improvement in a tape measure, the tape measure including a housing having a
2 longitudinal dimension from a distal edge to a proximal edge, and a retractable tape having a
3 distal end and bearing distance marks and distance indicators, wherein the improvement
4 comprises:

5 the distance indicators providing measurements from the distal end of the tape to the
6 proximal edge of the housing;

7 whereby inside measurements may be directly made with the improved tape measure
8 without a user having add in the distance of the longitudinal dimension.

1 10. The improvement of claim 9 in the tape measure, wherein the improvement further
2 comprises:

3 separate distance marks and distance indicators for inside measurement and for outside
4 measurement.

1 11. The improvement of claim 10 in the tape measure, wherein the improvement further
2 comprises:

3 an end piece rigidly coupled to the tape and including a perpendicular section; and
4 the inside measurement distance marks being offset along the tape from the outside
5 measurement distance marks by a distance corresponding to a thickness of the perpendicular
6 portion of the end piece.

1 12. The improvement of claim 9 in the tape measure, wherein the improvement further
2 comprises:

3 an end piece slideably coupled to the tape;
4 the distance marks including major marks and minor marks;
5 the distance indicators comprising outside measurement distance indicators and inside
6 measurement distance indicators; and

7 the longitudinal dimension of the housing is an integer multiple of a distance between
8 adjacent major marks;

9 whereby the outside distance indicators and the inside distance indicators are enabled to
10 share the same set of distance marks.